

a reduction to maybe even four amendments, even though there are many Members here who have plans and believe they are important. We could dispose of all of this in the period of a day, if not a day and a half.

It seems to me that it is not unreasonable to say that on this issue which is of central importance and significance to families all across this country—the issue over partnership, the Federal Government working with the States and local communities—that we address the issue of class size, and we also address the very important issue of the funding of the IDEA.

I think we can find very, very broad support for making sure that local communities are going to have the funding for IDEA, but I also think if put to a vote we would have a strong majority of Republicans and Democrats in favor of giving the communities across this country some help and assistance in terms of class size. That is something that every parent understands. It is something every teacher understands and every student understands.

No one makes that case better than the former school board member and former teacher herself, Senator MURRAY. I welcome the chance to hear her on this issue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from the State of Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Thank you, Mr. President.

Let me thank the Senator from Massachusetts for his statement. He has been a strong supporter of education. He understands that on this issue of class size reduction, parents, families, community members, police, mayors, school board members have all stood behind us and said this will make a difference for young children's learning.

I remain baffled by the majority leader not allowing us to simply offer the amendment with an up-or-down vote. We are more than willing to have a time agreement, a short time agreement, and move this bill along.

We all know that Ed-Flex has been asked for by 50 Governors. Well, reducing class size has been asked for by thousands of parents. It has been bipartisan—maybe it is not anymore; it certainly was last fall—a bipartisan initiative to reduce class size. I still believe that is true. It is timely, again, as school boards are looking at those budgets. If we can come to an agreement that will allow us to have an up-or-down vote, I am happy to offer my amendment. I will stay tonight; I can be here tomorrow morning.

Let me conclude by saying it is frustrating to be told no and no and no time and time again when we want to offer an amendment. I am beginning to feel like one of those kids in one of those large classes who has been told by the teacher time and again, "You have to wait." When that happens, you get frustrated, you start to think of other things to do. You can become a discipline problem. I don't want to be,

but I will tell my colleagues that we want to offer this amendment, we want an up-or-down vote, and as long as we are told we can't move ahead with it, we will think of other things to do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, first, let me comment on the remarks of the Senator from Washington.

First of all, this bill is a very simple bill to help the Governors have flexibility—the States to have flexibility to maximize the utilization of title I funds, in particular. I don't think anybody disagrees with it.

What I have set out as a policy for me, working with the leader, is that this bill ought not to be encumbered by matters which are under the jurisdiction of the committee which should be considered separately and after due hearing and after all of the elements of the legislation are considered. The amendment of the Senator from Washington really shortcuts that.

Now, I agree that is an existing piece of legislation which needs some improvement. However, it does not fall out from the jurisdiction of the committee. On the other hand, with an appropriate amendment, I will endorse it. So I don't understand the concern of my partners on the other side of the aisle.

We have an offer which will be before the Senate, and this side can endorse her amendment with the modification that is in that amendment. What that modification does is say, all right, let's reach a compromise here. The compromise would be, very simply, let the local governments decide whether they want to use the money which was appropriated but not quite available; they should have the local option. If they want to spend it on more teachers, additional teachers, they should have that option. If they want to spend it on IDEA, which I think most of the communities would do, they would have that option.

I don't see why you can say that we are placing ourselves in a position of preventing the amendment from going forward. I don't want to do that.

Let's also take a look at the problems of this committee. This committee has huge jurisdiction. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act spends about \$15 billion, and amendments that have been addressing this bill would bypass the committee's ability to review all of these programs, which we should do. We haven't done so for 5 years, and the education of this country is suffering badly from not being able to maximize the opportunities for our young people.

We have already had several hearings. We will have more hearings on it, and in the orderly process we ought to take those amendments up and vote on them at that time, but not now when we are just starting the legislative session.

We will have an opportunity for the Senate to vote on an excellent amend-

ment to the amendment of the Senator from Washington and give this body an opportunity to express itself. It will be, apparently, filibustered. I don't understand why or how anybody could filibuster an option for the local communities to decide whether they want to use it for new teachers or for special education.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-2077. A communication from the Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's report on the activities of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization for 1998; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2078. A communication from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office's report on the Federal government's use of voluntary consensus standards during fiscal year 1997; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2079. A communication from the Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Final List of Fisheries for 1999; Update of Regulations Authorizing Commercial Fisheries Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act" (I.D. 070798F) received on March 1, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2080. A communication from the Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Commercial Fishing Operations; Pacific Offshore Cetacean Take Reduction Plan Regulations; Technical Amendment" (I.D. 042798B) received on March 1, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2081. A communication from the Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Commercial Fishing Operations; Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan Regulations" (I.D. 031997C) received on March 1, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2082. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,